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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING



REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: May 12, 2008

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Early Season Waterfowl Hunting Regulations  
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2008  
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) annually prescribes migratory bird hunting season frameworks, or outer limits, for dates, shooting hours, and the maximum number of birds that may be taken and possessed. Federal frameworks are negotiated with states via the Flyway Councils and this process is partitioned into an early and late season regulations and state season selection process. Early seasons generally open prior to the Saturday closest to September 24, and state selections are due to the USFWS by July 31 each year. Late season selections are submitted to the USFWS by August 30 each year.

The Department recommends that we align our migratory bird hunting season recommendations with the federal time frames. Under this time frame, changes to early season recommendations are submitted to the Natural Resources Commission for action in July and the late season recommendations are submitted for action in August. In Michigan, early seasons currently include any waterfowl season that opens prior to the Saturday closest to September 24 (including falconry), the federal youth waterfowl hunt, and woodcock, rail, and snipe regular seasons.

We have included appropriate sections from the Wildlife Conservation Order, as amended during 2007, to identify those sections likely requiring amendment in 2008. Dates listed in these sections reflect the 2007-2008 seasons and are used as placeholders only; 2008-2009 dates will be included as soon as they become available. We will again be requesting authority for the Chief of the Wildlife Division to close goose hunting at goose management units when the harvest quota allocated to these units has been achieved.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Keith J. Charters, Chair • Mary Brown • Hurley J. Coleman, Jr. • Darnell Earley • John Madigan • J. R. Richardson • Frank Wheatlake

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The Department's submissions for the early federal framework for waterfowl regulations will include no changes to season frameworks for the early goose seasons, starting dates for the falconry season, and the youth waterfowl hunting weekend. We are proposing two recommended changes to Michigan's waterfowl hunting regulations based on feedback and discussion with the Citizen Waterfowl Advisory Committee at their March 2008 meeting.

The first recommendation is a change to the starting date of the Zone 1 regular goose season. The Zone 1 regular goose season is recommended to begin on September 22 and run for the maximum available days, which has been 45 days in past few years. The duration of this season will be recommended at the July Mississippi Flyway meeting and the USFWS Regulations Committee will consider the Flyway proposal at their July 30-31, 2008 meeting.

The second recommended change deals with early goose season bag limits. Currently the season bag limit is three Canada geese per day. The recommended change is to increase the bag limit to five per day and an associated increase in the possession limit to ten geese. Michigan's local giant Canada goose population has increased the past two years and an increase in the bag limit to five birds per day will help maintain the population within the desired goal range. The number of Michigan resident geese was estimated at 218,850 in the spring of 2007. Local geese remain abundant, but the statewide population is well below the record 325,000 spring estimate observed eight years ago. Although hunting cannot completely eliminate conflicts between geese and Michigan residents, maintaining the population near goal will help balance desires of hunters and others interested in seeing geese with desires of people seeking resolution of conflicts. Allowing for an increase from three birds per day to five per day should provide an increase in annual harvest for the early goose season.

Recommendation:

This order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's May 27, 2008 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 10, 2008.

Douglas A. Reeves, Acting Chief  
Wildlife Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division

Lynne M. Boyd, Chief  
Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division

Rodney Stokes, Acting Chief  
Law Enforcement Division

Arminda S. Koch  
Resource Management Deputy

Dennis Fedewa  
Chief Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries  
Director

# **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER**

## **Amendment No. 11 of 2008**

Under the authority of sections 40107 and 40113a, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, being sections 324.40107 and 324.40113a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources ordered that effective July 11, 2008, the following sections of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

### **3.413 Early September Canada goose season, daily limit, possession limit.**

Sec. 3.413. During the early September Canada goose season, the daily limit shall be 5 Canada geese and the possession limit shall be 10 Canada geese.

### **3.415 Migratory birds; possession limit defined; open seasons.**

Sec. 3.415. The migratory bird possession limit shall be twice the daily limit except that the possession limit for blue, snow, and Ross' geese shall be three times the daily limit. The migratory bird hunting open seasons shall be as follows:

<b>Season and Species</b>	<b>Zone or Management Unit</b>	<b>Open Season</b>
Ducks	North Zone	September 27 to November 25
	Middle Zone	September 27 to November 23 and December 6 to December 7
	South Zone	October 4 to November 30 and January 3 and January 4, 2008
Merganser		Same dates as ducks in the respective zones.
Coots and Moorhens		Same dates as ducks in the respective zones.
Canada Goose (regular season)	North Zone	September 20 to November 3
	Middle Zone	October 4 to November 10 and November 22 to November 28
	South Zone – Southern James Bay Population Unit	October 4 to October 12 and November 22 to December 12
	South Zone – Mississippi Valley Population Unit	October 4 to November 10 and November 22 to November 28
	Tuscola/Huron GMU	October 4 to November 22 (or quota)
	Saginaw County GMU	October 4 to November 22 (or quota)

Season and Species	Zone or Management Unit	Open Season
	Allegan County GMU	November 29 to December 7 and December 27 to January 31, 2008 (or quota)
	Muskegon W.W. GMU	October 18 to November 11 and December 6 to December 13 (or quota)
Canada Goose (special late season)	Southern Michigan Goose Management Unit as defined in section 12.700 of this order.	January 3 to February 1, 2008
Brant, Snow, White-fronted, and Ross' Geese	Statewide	September 20 to December 1

Issued this 10th day of July, 2008.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Keith J. Charters, Chairman  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries  
Director